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warped words

%FIRST COMICS,
1014 DAVIS STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

Dear Warpers:

And so it ends. The first of the Warp cycles ceases to be, not with a spectacular bang, full of sound and fury, but quietly, with a whisper that there's more to come. It was beautiful.

We know, through the first Warp Special that Chaos cannot be conquered, merely abated. I do not think that he will be down long ... and if Chaos returns, cannot Lord Cumulus be far behind? In a new, and altogether different incarnation? An alien Lord Cumuls might be interesting.

Before I forget, thanks Frank, your stay made Warp exciting. I hope you have something else that needs to be said, I'd love to see your work again. Also, hello, Jerry, I loved your Iron Man. I cannot see but where Warp will continue its excellence.

Once again, congrats on a fine First first run. I'll be watching for further developments.

Charles B. Cockett, Jr.
353 McComb Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82007

Dear Mike Gold,

Re: Warp #9

The title, "The End of The Dream," is certainly appropriate. Because of this issue, I am considering not buying this comic anymore. I am going to give you until issue twelve before I make up my mind. I will try to explain what turned me off so maybe you can correct it and keep me as a reader.

My first complaint is that Brunner is leaving. I hope we have not seen the last of his work gracing the insides of a comic.

The printing is my next complaint. My copy had several pages that were nearly a white out. This compounded my displeasure that Brunner was leaving. Here it was, Brunner's last job and the printing was terrible.

The coloring was bad also. This was due in part to the bad printing. I know you cannot correct my first complaint, but you can be more careful about the last two.

Steven Rea Thomas
South Yeater Hall,
Room 317
Central Missouri State
University
Warrensburg, MO 64093

Well, issue #12 has come and gone. Are you still with us, Steven?

In regard to your complaints concerning the coloring and the printing on **Warp** *#9: You obviously got a defective copy. None of our office copies show any evidence of "white out," and the printing was up to the normal standards for Mando comic books. The coloring is the work of Janice Cohen, who colored the entire adaptation. Her work on Warp, Jon Sable, Freelance, and Starslayer is among the very best in comics today.*

Dear Mike:

The third segment of the Warp saga was by far the best. I could not really get a feel for the characters during the Cumulus/Chaos segment. It may be that you tried too hard in starting off the series. You reached the peak of quality in the quest segment, I must say. I was really able to feel for the characters in this part. The ending was a bit of a surprise, though.

Obviously, we will see more of Cumulus and Chaos in the future. Remember when Ego released the essence of what made them who they were? I predict this will eventually cause them to be recreated. Perhaps it is similar to what happened to Cumuls at the end of Warp Special #1.

Well, I can hardly wait for 'Warp — The Next Chapter' to come out. I wish that we had gotten a peek at Jerry Bingham's art, but it ought to be worth looking forward to.

T.J. Campbell
1225 Bay Ridge Rd.
Madison, WI 53716

Don't you just hate it when your predictions are revealed after the fact? Anyway, now that you've had four issues of **Jerry Bingham's** *artwork — was it worth the wait?*

Dear Editor:

I was just re-reading a number of old comics that I haven't read in a few years, and I came across Green Lantern/Green Arrow #94 (April-May 1977). I couldn't help but notice that on page 5, panel 5 John Stewart has an original theater poster for the Warp plays on the wall. The comic at the time, you may recall, was pencilled by First's own Mike Grell. I'm amazed nobody pointed this out in print before.

Roger Kulp
P.O. Box 40600
Albuequerque, NM 87196

Actually, you weren't supposed to notice. That panel was part of our advance (five year) promotional campaign, and it was also the first test of **Howard Chaykin's** *theory of "subliminals." Since it didn't work on you, you must be one of Reuben Flagg's relatives on* **Mars.**

How 'bout that ... with one letter, we were able to plug half our line.

NEXT MONTH: Warp takes a break, as we bring you **Warp Special** #3: "Four Figures On a Darkened Stage," by **Peter Gillis** and **George Freeman.** Find out what happened to Chaos and Valaria after **Warp Special** #1!

Warp returns in March with issue #14 — "Wizard's Gambit!" by **Gillis, Jerry Bingham,** and **Mike Gustovich.**

— Rick Oliver

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WARP™ Vol. 1, No. 13, May 1984. Published by FIRST COMICS, INC., Mike Gold, President; Rick Obadiah, Secretary; Richard Felber, Treasurer; Kenneth F. Levin and Ralph C. Musicant, Directors. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 1014 Davis Street, Evanston, IL 60201. Published monthly, including Warp Specials. Copyright © 1984 First Comics, Inc. All rights reserved. Price: $1.00 in the U.S., $1.25 in Canada. Subscription rates for twelve issues: $12.00 in the U.S., $14.00 in Canada, and $29.00 foreign rate. All payments must be in U.S. funds. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this publication are entirely fictional. No actual persons, living or dead, without satiric content are intended or should be inferred. Warp, Lord Cumulus, Chaos — Prince of Madness, Luguibanda, Sargon — Mistress of War, Valaria, Symax, Xander, The Faceless Ones, and all prominent characters featured in this issue are trademarks of First Comics, Inc. Printed in the U.S.A. by World Color Press. Engraved by Post Graphics. Not intended for the unintentional. Application to mail at second class postage rates is pending at Evanston, Illinois, 60204. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Warp, c/o First Comics, Inc., 1014 Davis St., Evanston, IL 60201.

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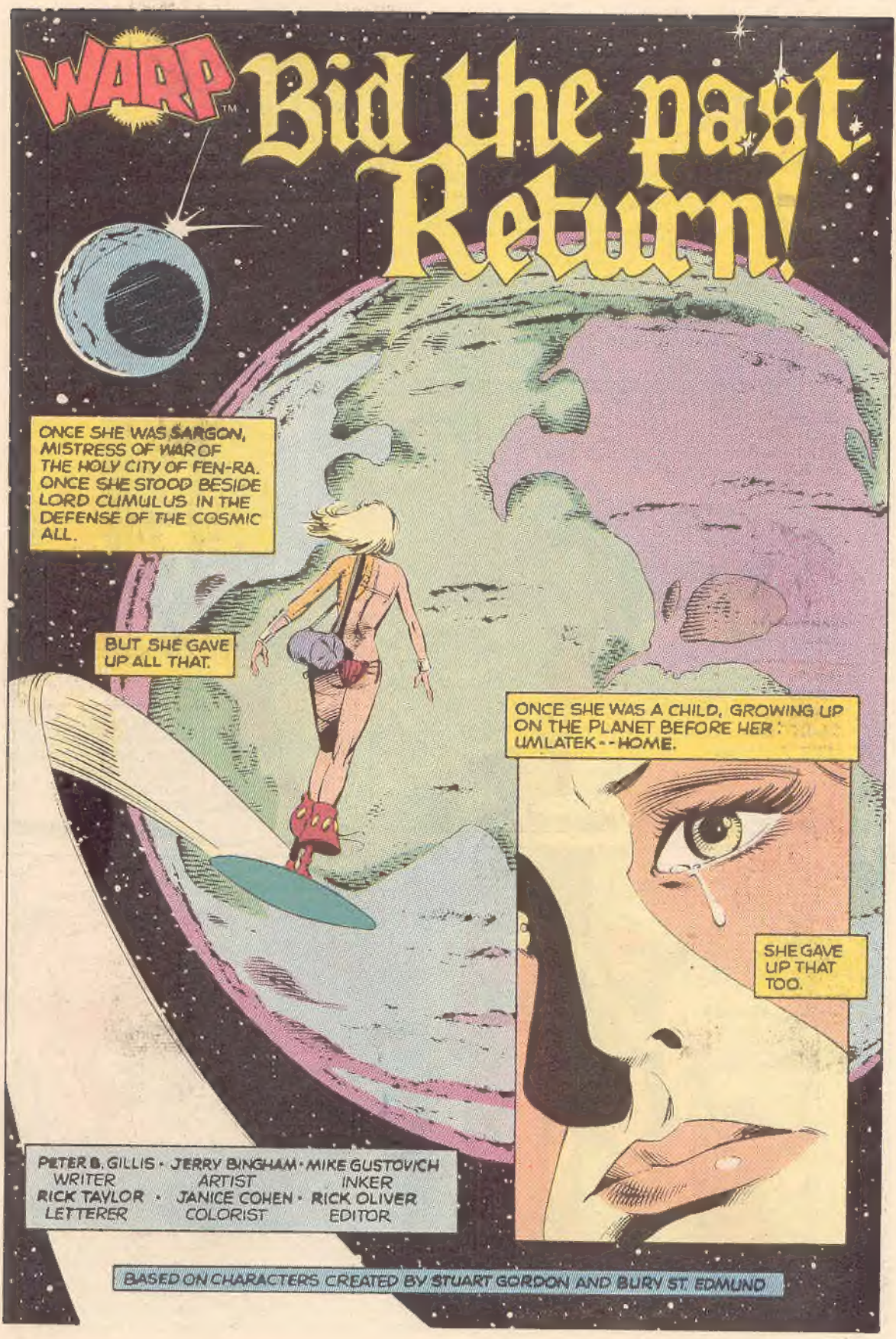
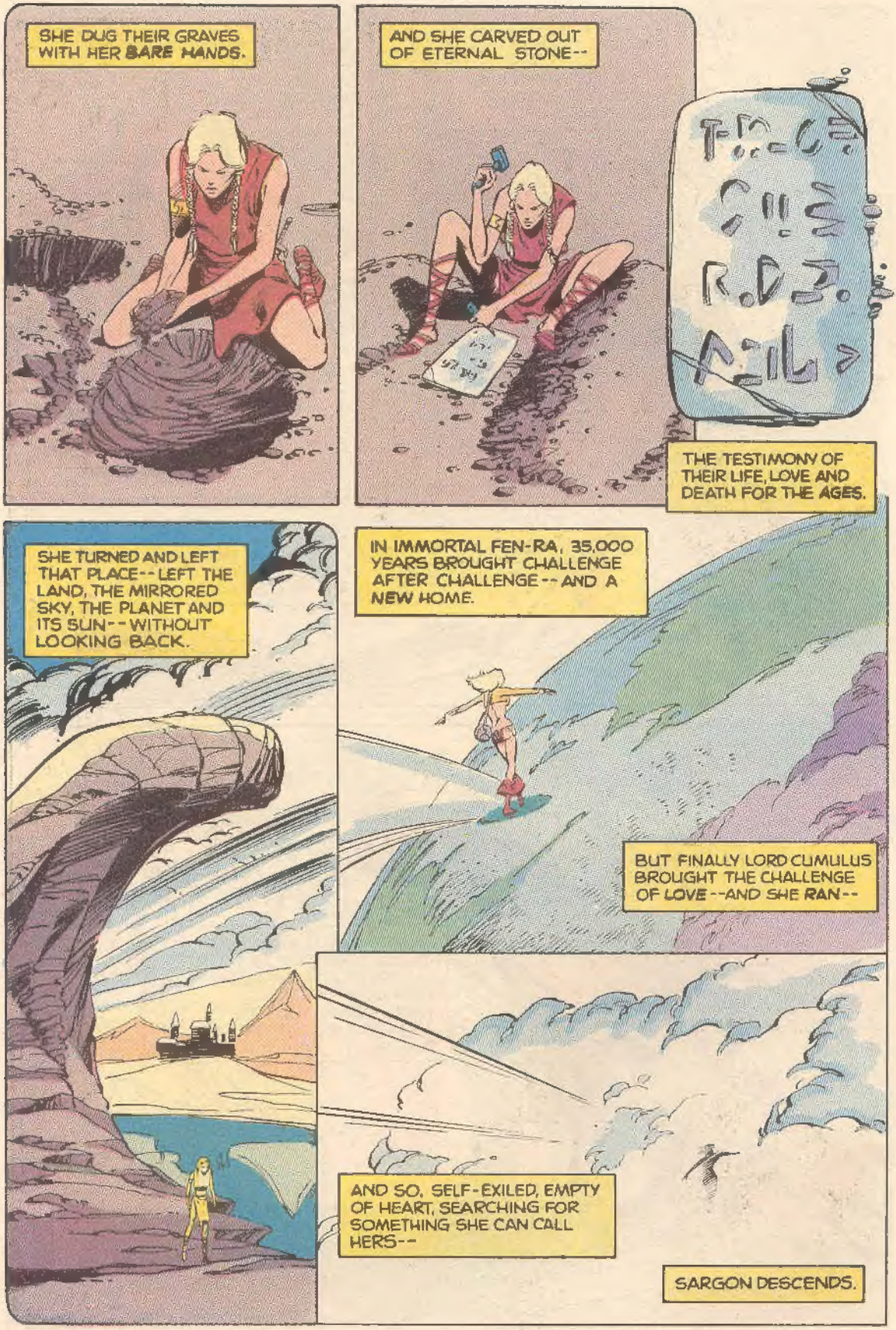
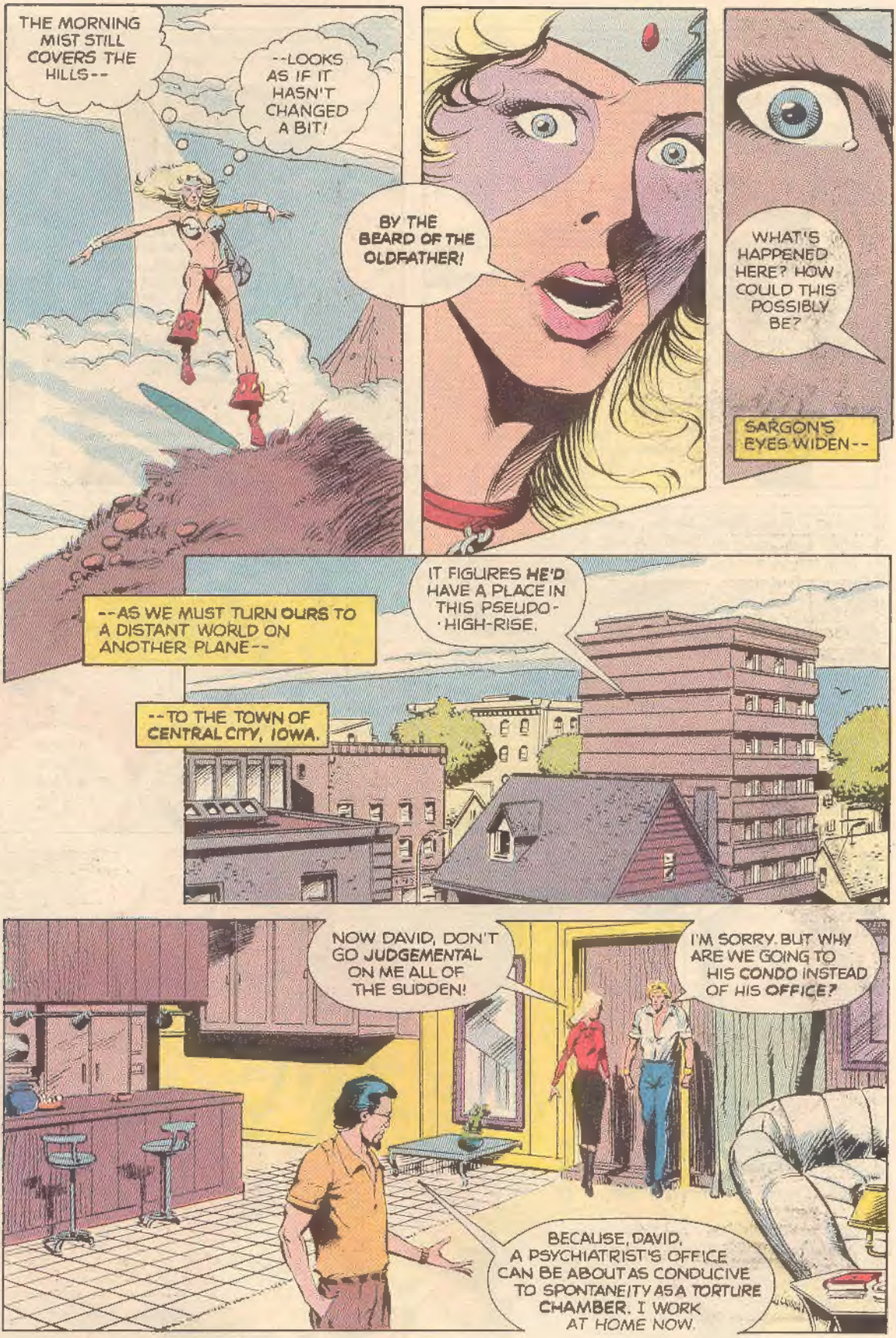

WARP™
Bid the past Return!
ONCE SHE WAS SARGON, MISTRESS OF WAR OF THE HOLY CITY OF FEN-RA. ONCE SHE STOOD BESIDE LORD CLIMULUS IN THE DEFENSE OF THE COSMIC ALL.
BUT SHE GAVE UP ALL THAT.
ONCE SHE WAS A CHILD, GROWING UP ON THE PLANET BEFORE HER: UMLATEK--HOME.
SHE GAVE UP THAT TOO.
PETER B. GILLIS · JERRY BINGHAM · MIKE GUSTOVICH
WRITER ARTIST INKER
RICK TAYLOR · JANICE COHEN · RICK OLIVER
LETTERER COLORIST EDITOR
BASED ON CHARACTERS CREATED BY STUART GORDON AND BURN ST. EDMUND

UMLATEK WAS A PLANET THAT ONLY GRUDGINGLY ACCEPTED TECHNOLOGY--
--A SERENE, VERDANT, AND MAGICAL PLACE TO BE A CHILD.
THOUGH HER FATHER WAS ELDER BROTHER OF THE ROYAL HOUSE OF UMLATEK, HER YOUTH WAS FILLED WITH THE SOUNDS AND SIGHTS OF HERDING, FARMING, OPEN SKY AND CLEAN LIGHT.
MA! DA! AM I TOO LATE?
SO, DAUGTHER-- THE GLYMPHS ALL IN?
ALL WELL, FATHER-- AM I IN TIME?
FALCHION, SARGON'S FATHER WAS A BIG, GRUFF, AFFECTIONATE MAN; LIERENE HER MOTHER, A QUIET STRENGTH.
DOES SHE MEAN, THEN, HAS SHE MISSED THE CONVENING OF THE PLANETARY COUNCIL? IS THAT IT?
PLEASE, DA!
NO, I'LL BROADCAST WHEN SARGON'S AT MY SIDE, OR NOT AT ALL!
OH, DA!
EVEN HER SISTER VALARIA WAS A MERRY FRIEND.

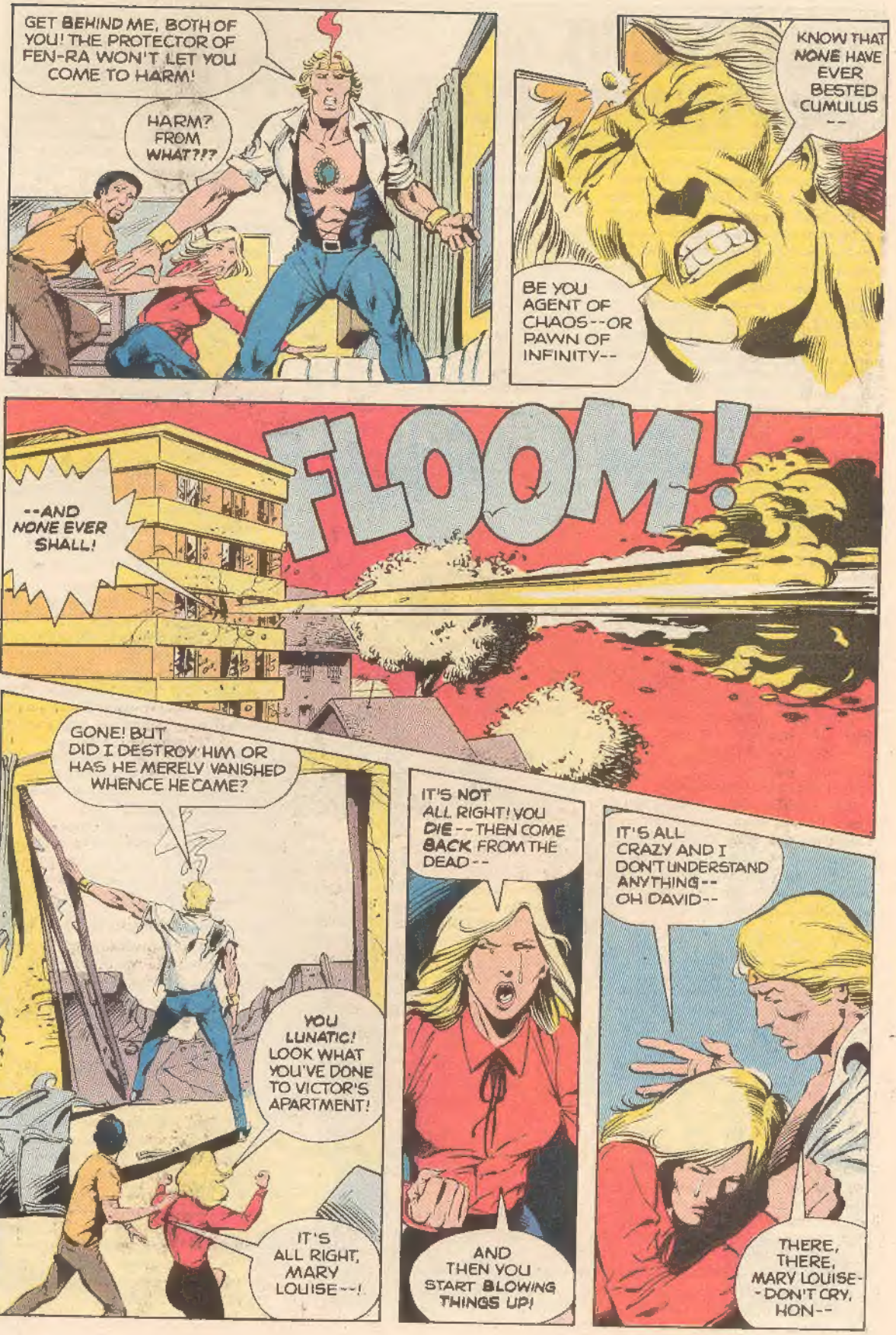
AND THEN THERE CAME A TIME, NOT TOO LONG AFTER THAT, WHEN SHE WAS OLDER, AND FAR LESS A CHILD--
--WHEN SHE HITCHED THE BANDS OF A TRAVOIS OVER HER SHOULDER.
SHE REMEMBERS HOW THE HEAD-STRIP BIT INTO HER, HOW SHE ACHED ONLY PARTLY FROM THE STRAIN--
--DRAGGING THE SLAIN BODIES OF HER MOTHER AND FATHER--
--TO THEIR PLACE OF BURIAL.
FALCHION AND LIERENE HAD CHOSEN THE SPOT OF THEIR LAST REST AT SUNRISE ON THE DAY AFTER THEIR WEDDING: THRUST INTO THE AIR WITH THE SKY MIRRORED BELOW.
SARGON DID NOT SEE ITS BEAUTY ON THIS BLEAK DAY.

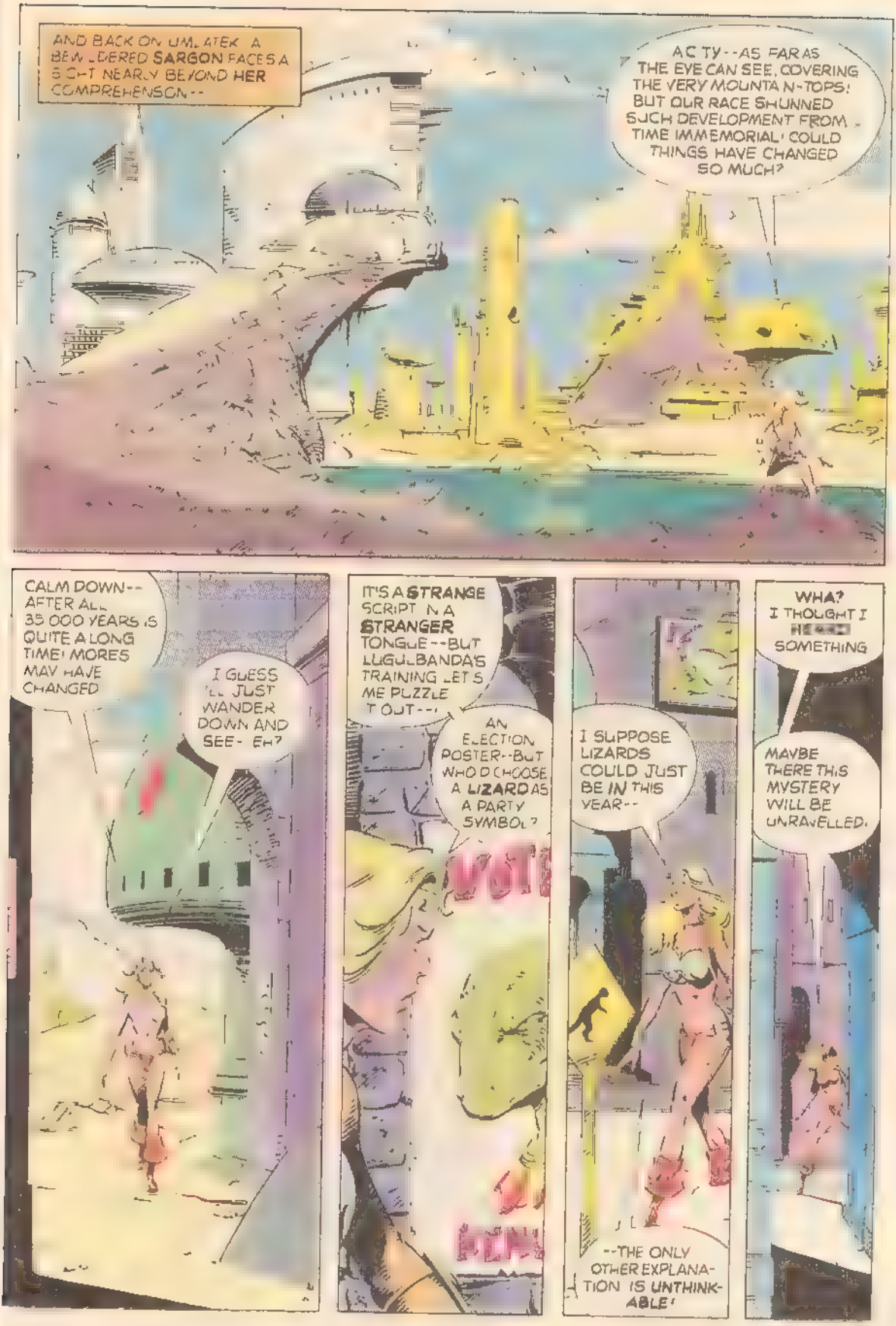

SHE DUG THEIR GRAVES WITH HER BARE HANDS.
AND SHE CARVED OUT OF ETERNAL STONE--
THE TESTIMONY OF THEIR LIFE, LOVE AND DEATH FOR THE AGES.
SHE TURNED AND LEFT THAT PLACE--LEFT THE LAND, THE MIRRORED SKY, THE PLANET AND ITS SUN--WITHOUT LOOKING BACK.
IN IMMORTAL FEN-RA, 35,000 YEARS BROUGHT CHALLENGE AFTER CHALLENGE--AND A NEW HOME.
BUT FINALLY LORD CUMULUS BROUGHT THE CHALLENGE OF LOVE--AND SHE RAN--
AND SO, SELF-EXILED, EMPTY OF HEART, SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING SHE CAN CALL HERS--
SARGON DESCENDS.


THE MORNING MIST STILL COVERS THE HILLS--
--LOOKS AS IF IT HASN'T CHANGED A BIT!
BY THE BEARD OF THE OLDFATHER!
WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE? HOW COULD THIS POSSIBLY BE?
SARGON'S EYES WIDEN--
--AS WE MUST TURN OURS TO A DISTANT WORLD ON ANOTHER PLANE--
IT FIGURES HE'D HAVE A PLACE IN THIS PSEUDO-HIGH-RISE.
--TO THE TOWN OF CENTRAL CITY, IOWA.
NOW DAVID, DON'T GO JUDGEMENTAL ON ME ALL OF THE SUDDEN!
I'M SORRY. BUT WHY ARE WE GOING TO HIS CONDO INSTEAD OF HIS OFFICE?
BECAUSE, DAVID, A PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE CAN BE ABOUT AS CONDUCIVE TO SPONTANEITY AS A TORTURE CHAMBER. I WORK AT HOME NOW.

COME DAVID! SIT DOWN--OR STAND IF YOU PREFER.
DAVID--DR. VIVIAN REALLY CAN HELP! HE'S DONE WONDERS FOR ME--!
INCLUDING BLABBING TO YOU ABOUT HOW HE TREATED ME IN THE NUTHOUSE IN INDIANA! THANKS VERY MUCH!
DAVID--MARY LOUISE NEEDED TO KNOW. I'VE TOLD NO ONE ELSE.
JUST AS NOW SHE'S TOLD ME ALL ABOUT FEN-RA AND YOUR BECOMING LORD CUMULUS.
I'M NOT GOING TO SCOFF. I ACKNOWLEDGE SOMETHING AMAZING HAS HAPPENED.
BIG OF YOU.
WHAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT NOW IS THIS SENSE OF ALIENATION AND--YES--HOSTILITY I GET FROM YOU.
I KNOW WHY YOU WANTED TO COME HOME. WHAT GOOD IS HAVING ALL THESE POWERS IF EVERYONE ELSE IN FEN-RA HAS THEM TOO?
BUT THE TRIUMPHAL HOMECOMING ISN'T AS SATISFYING AS YOU'D THOUGHT? ISN'T THAT IT?
AFTER ALL, YOU HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO STOP ONE RUNAWAY TRAIN OR BANK ROBBERY, OR HAD ONE SUPER VILLAIN--
VICTOR, PLEASE--DON'T MAKE FUN OF HIM.
YOU'RE RIGHT I'M SORRY.
BUT TELL THE TRUTH, DON'T YOU FEEL THAT WHEN YOU BECAME LORD CUMULUS--
--THAT YOU LOST AS MUCH AS YOU GAINED?
LOST? LOST? I TELL YOU WHAT I'VE LOST--!

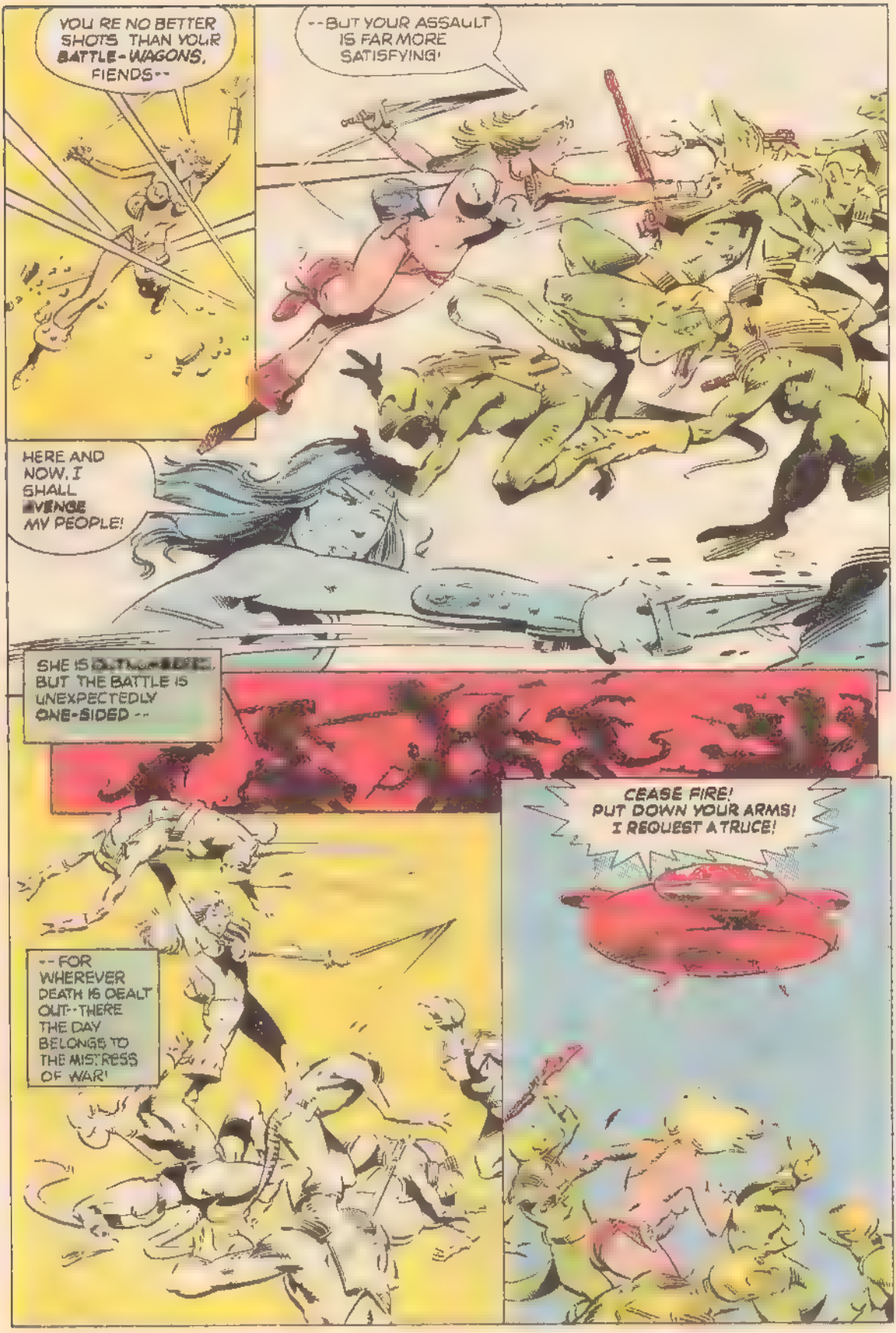
I'VE LOST THE TIMIDITY THAT CAUSED ME TO DEFER TO THE LIKES OF YOU.
WHOOPS.
PUT HIM DOWN AT ONCE, YOU BIG MACHO JOCK!
HUNH?
IT'S ALL RIGHT, MARY LOUISE--TRY TO PUT YOURSELF IN HIS SPOT AND YOU'LL UNDERSTAND.
EVEN WHILE HE'S SEEKING TO RE-ESTABLISH DAVID CARSON, HE'S DEFENSIVE ABOUT HIS "LORD CUMULUS" IDENTITY: HE'S AFRAID DAVID CARSON NO LONGER EXISTS!
YOU'RE RIGHT, OF COURSE, VICTOR.
WILL YOU STOP CALLING HIM VICTOR, DAMN IT?!?
YOU'VE BEEN--
BY HE WHO DREAMS--!
I'M SORRY IF MY MANNER IRRITATES YOU, DAVID--IT'S JUST MY WAY OF RELATING--!
DAVID--WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT US SO STRANGELY, DAVID--?
LOOK, EVEN THE FACT THAT HE'S WEARING HIS COSTUME UNDER HIS CLOTHES IS INDICATIVE OF HIS PROBLEM!


GET BEHIND ME, BOTH OF YOU! THE PROTECTOR OF FEN-RA WON'T LET YOU COME TO HARM!
HARM? FROM WHAT?!?
KNOW THAT NONE HAVE EVER BESTED CUMULUS --
BE YOU AGENT OF CHAOS--OR PAWN OF INFINITY--
FLOOM!
--AND NONE EVER SHALL!
GONE! BUT DID I DESTROY HIM OR HAS HE MERELY VANISHED WHENCE HE CAME?
YOU LUNATIC! LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO VICTOR'S APARTMENT!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, MARY LOUISE--!
IT'S NOT ALL RIGHT! YOU DIE--THEN COME BACK FROM THE DEAD--
AND THEN YOU START BLOWING THINGS UP!
IT'S ALL CRAZY AND I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING-- OH DAVID--
THERE, THERE, MARY LOUISE--DON'T CRY, HON--


AND BACK ON UMLATEK A BEWILDERED SARGON FACES A SIGHT NEARLY BEYOND HER COMPREHENSION--
ACTY--AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE, COVERING THE VERY MOUNTAIN-TOPS! BUT OUR RACE SHUNNED SUCH DEVELOPMENT FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL! COULD THINGS HAVE CHANGED SO MUCH?
CALM DOWN--AFTER ALL 35 000 YEARS IS QUITE A LONG TIME! MORES MAY HAVE CHANGED
I GUESS I'LL JUST WANDER DOWN AND SEE- EH?
IT'S A STRANGE SCRIPT IN A STRANGER TONGUE--BUT LUGULBANDA'S TRAINING LETS ME PUZZLE IT OUT--!
AN ELECTION POSTER--BUT WHO'D CHOOSE A LIZARD AS A PARTY SYMBOL?
I SUPPOSE LIZARDS COULD JUST BE IN THIS YEAR--
--THE ONLY OTHER EXPLANATION IS UNTHINKABLE!
WHA? I THOUGHT I [illegible] SOMETHING
MAYBE THERE THIS MYSTERY WILL BE UNRAVELLED.

BY HE WHO DREAMS! THIS CAN'T BE! THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE!
WHAT ARE ALL THESE LIZARDS DOING HERE? WHERE ARE MY PEOPLE?
ALIEN MONSTERS! SARGON OF THE HOUSE ROYAL OF UMLATEK COMMANDS YOU! TELL WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO MY KINDRED!
WHAT THE-- AN ALIEN MAMMAL-- WITH A SWORD?!?
YOU'LL EITHER YOU TELL ME WHAT CRIME YOU HAVE COMMITTED UPON MY RACE, OR I'LL GUT YOU HERE AND NOW!
GUT ME? SHE'S CRAZY!
THIS MUST BE THE WARRIOR HUMAN WE WERE WARNED ABOUT! SOUND THE ALARM!
FWEEEE!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME TWICE!

FLEE! FLEE FOR YOUR LIVES!
IT'S ANOTHER ATTACK!
NOW YOU'LL GET YOUR COMEUPPANCE!
WARSHIPS! WELL, SARGON IS A MATCH FOR YOU ALL!
THE SHIPS' ONSLAUGHT IS DEVASTATING--AND THEIR FURY SEEMS GREATLY OUT OF PROPORTION TO THE SINGLE TARGET!
ZEOW!
KRZJAT!
SUCH A BLUDGEONING ASSAULT IS USELESS AGAINST A FOE WITH ANY AGILITY! ARE YOU THEN SO AFRAID TO FACE ME IN THE FLESH?
BUT A MOMENT LATER, SARGON'S TAUNT IS ANSWERED WITH


YOU RE NO BETTER SHOTS THAN YOUR BATTLE-WAGONS, FIENDS--
--BUT YOUR ASSAULT IS FAR MORE SATISFYING!
HERE AND NOW, I SHALL AVENGE MY PEOPLE!
SHE IS [illegible], BUT THE BATTLE IS UNEXPECTEDLY ONE-SIDED --
CEASE FIRE! PUT DOWN YOUR ARMS! I REQUEST A TRUCE!
-- FOR WHEREVER DEATH IS DEALT OUT-- THERE THE DAY BELONGS TO THE MISTRESS OF WAR!

THE ENTIRE DEFENSE FORCE--BROUGHT OUT AGAINST ONE ALIEN?
AND YOU UNABLE TO SUBDUE HER? WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHO SOUNDED THE INVASION ALARM ON SUCH MEASLY PROVOCATION?
I DID, COMMANDER I HEARD THE RUMORS ABOUT THE HUMAN FEMALE WARRIOR AND I THOUGHT--
YOU THOUGHT WRONG! AND YOU'LL THINK IN JAIL FROM NOW ON!
AND NOW GENTLEBEING--I REQUEST YOU STATE YOUR NAME AND PURPOSE--!
I AM SARGON--OF LATE MISTRESS OF WAR OF FEN-RA--
FEN-RA!
BY HE WHO DREAMS--
THE HOLY CITY!
THE LEGENDS LIVE!
MAY I ASK WHAT THE GODDESS SARGON MEANS TO DO ON MRENGAR?
MRENGAR? THIS IS UMLATEK!
THIS IS MY HOME, AND I SEEK MY PEOPLE
THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE GODDESS WE MRENGARE! HAVE LIVED ON THIS WORLD FOR WELL OVER TEN THOUSAND YEARS!
THEN IT WAS YOUR ANCESTORS WHO CONQUERED AND SLEW MY RACE YOU SHALL STILL PAY DEARLY!

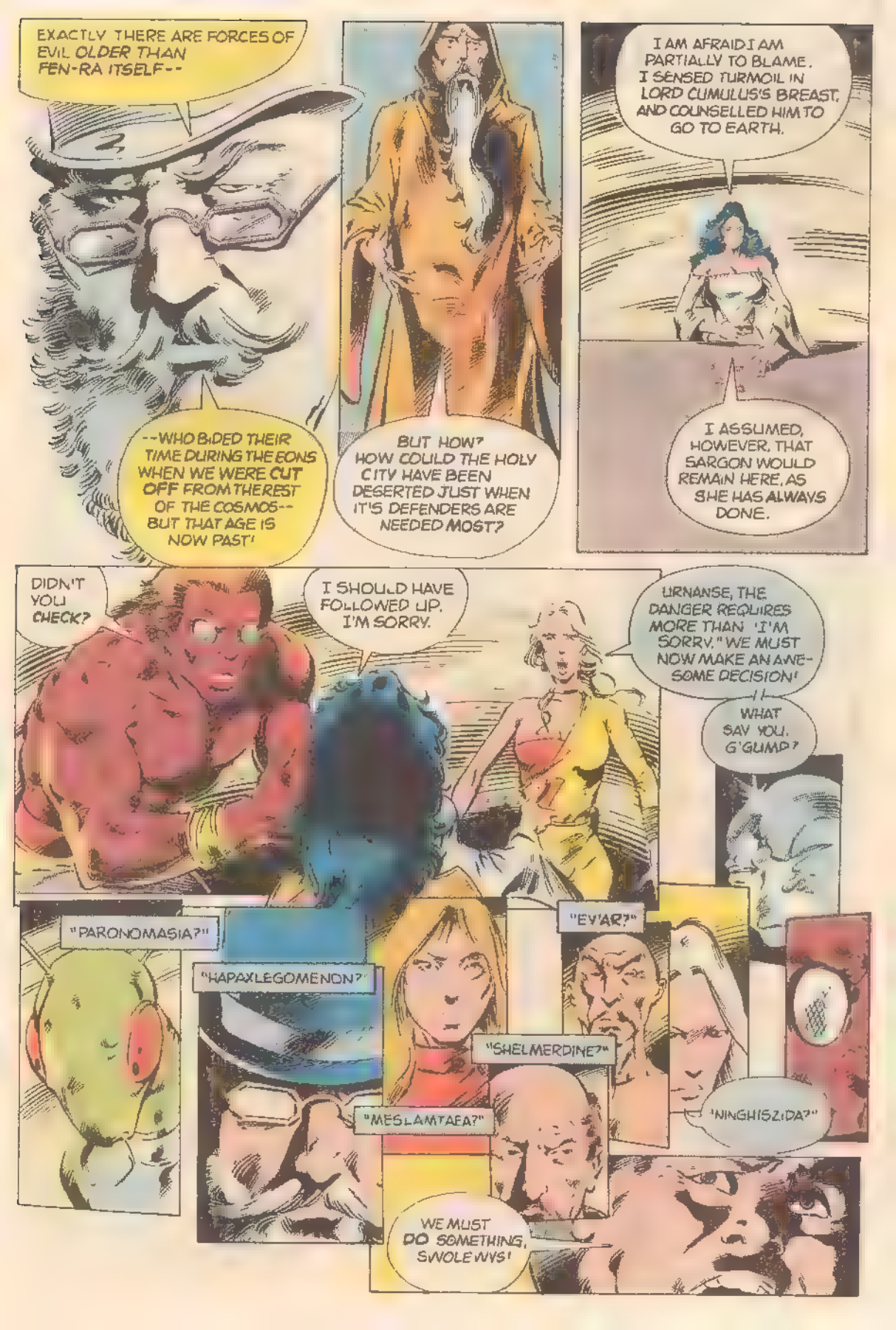
PARDON, GODDESS, BUT WHEN WE FLED OUR DYING PLANET AND LANDED HERE, THERE WAS NO ONE — ONLY RUINS, THE YOUNGEST OF WHICH WAS OVER TWENTY THOUSAND YEARS OLD--IT IS THE TRUTH, I SWEAR--!
TWENTY ?
NO! IT CANNOT BE! IT MUST NOT BE!
AND THEN SHE IS SILENT--AS SHE TURNS FROM THE SQUARE AND WALKS AS IF THE MRENGARE!
A HEAVY
--AND WHEN SHE REACHES THE BUILDING ATOP THE HEADLAND, SHE GAZES
MOMENT, UNCOMPRENDING.

SHE ENTERS COUNTING HER STEPS AS IF SHE REMEMBERED EACH SINGLE PACE VIVIDLY--
--THEN SHE STOPS AT A CERTAIN SPOT ON THE LOBBY FLOOR
ABRUPTLY, SHE RIPS THE SHINING METAL PLATES FROM THE BUILDING'S FOUNDATION--
--AND DIVES THROUGH THE STRATA OF MILENNIA
THIS IS THE PLACE--THIS IS THE SPOT!
BUT
HERE IS HER FATHER'S NAME--HER MOTHER'S--THEIR TESTIMONY FOR THE AGES--
--WORN ALMOST TOTALLY CLEAN
DONE
I AM SARGON--
--AND I AM NOTHING--!
I AM SARGON! SARGON OF UMLATEK, DAUGHTER OF FALCHION AND LIERENE, OF THE HOUSE ROYAL--

AND IN THE CITY OF FEN-RA TSELF WE FIND THE WIZARD LUGULBANDA, HE WHO IS KNOWLEDGE INCARNATE--
--FAST ASLEEP
--FOR THE NEXT SIXTY SECONDS, WE SHALL BE CONDUCTING A TEST OF THE EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM. THIS IS ONLY A TEST--
BRRRRRR--
WHAT? OH! MUST HAVE BEEN MORE TIRED THAN I THOUGHT--!
SARGON! HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN ASLEEP MY DEAR?
SARGON!
THAT'S ODD! SHE'S USUALLY RIGHT AT HAND-- DIDN'T LEAVE A NOTE--
MY LORD?
YES SPEAK
THE LADY SARGON! RESIGNED HER COMM SSION AS MISTRESS OF WAR AND LEFT
REALLY?
YES
MOST DISTRESSING- LORD CUMULUS DOESN'T SEEM TO BE AROUND EITHER --NOR ARE CHAOS OR SVMAX'
I MUST DISCOVER WHAT HAS HAPPENED
THIS COULD BE SERIOUS--!

HMM.. LORD CUMULUS IS SAFE IF NOT PARTICULARLY HAPPY ON EARTH--
SARGON IS ON THAT PLANET WITH THE DREADFUL NAME--WHAT WAS IT?
--CHAOS IN CYNOSURE--
ALL RIGHT, BUB--SHUT THAT THING OFF!
HMMM
AND SYMAX SEEMS TO BE FALLING THROUGH THE ABYSS-
--BUT HE'S USING THE LASER-FINGER IN HIS ARTIFICIAL HAND TO PROPEL HIM
THEY'RE ALL SAFE--BUT WHAT CAUSED THEM ALL TO LEAVE? MOST DISTRESSING--

ALL OUR CHAMPIONS AWAY-- FEN-RA DESERTED-- I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO TELL THEM ABOUT IT--
SUCH AN OCCURENCE CAN T BE THE WORK OF CHANCE-- BUT DESIGN!
SUCH DESIGN MAY TAKE ALL MY FELLOW WIZARDS TO THWART--
--I ONLY WISH THEY DIDN'T ALWAYS GIVE ME A HEADACHE.
THEY RE ALL HERE. OH DEAR
VERY INTEREST.NG URNANSHE
IF IT ISN'T LITTLE LUGU! NEVER COMES EXCEPT BEARING BAD NEWS! WHAT IS IT?
I MUST TELL YOU THAT ALL OUR CHAMPIONS, CUMULUS, SARGON, EVEN CHAOS AND SYMAX, UN-LIKELY AS THEY ARE-- HAVE LEFT FEN-RA
THEN WE ARE UNPROTECTED!
AND S.NCE THE COSMIC BARRIERS ARE DOWN, WE ARE OPEN TO ATTACK--
--AND I SHUDDER TO THINK HOW MANY ENEMIES WE HAVE!


EXACTLY THERE ARE FORCES OF EVIL OLDER THAN FEN-RA ITSELF--
--WHO BIDED THEIR TIME DURING THE EONS WHEN WE WERE CUT OFF FROM THE REST OF THE COSMOS-- BUT THAT AGE IS NOW PAST!
BUT HOW? HOW COULD THE HOLY CITY HAVE BEEN DESERTED JUST WHEN IT'S DEFENDERS ARE NEEDED MOST?
I AM AFRAID I AM PARTIALLY TO BLAME. I SENSED TURMOIL IN LORD CUMULUS'S BREAST, AND COUNSELLED HIM TO GO TO EARTH.
I ASSUMED, HOWEVER, THAT SARGON WOULD REMAIN HERE, AS SHE HAS ALWAYS DONE.
DIDN'T YOU CHECK?
I SHOULD HAVE FOLLOWED UP. I'M SORRY.
URNANSE, THE DANGER REQUIRES MORE THAN 'I'M SORRY.' WE MUST NOW MAKE AN AWE-SOME DECISION!
WHAT SAY YOU, G'GUMP?
"PARONOMASIA?"
"HAPAXLEGOMENON?"
"EV'AR?"
"SHELMERDINE?"
"MESLAMTAEA?"
'NINGHISZIDA?"
WE MUST DO SOMETHING, SWOLEWYS!

DO SOMETHING, ENCHIRIDION?

DO SOMETHING-- WIZARDS? HA!

WE HAVE NO CHOICE!

WE NEED MORE THAN CYNICISM, AT ANY RATE!

I HAVE SOME AWFUL ENEMIES--

IT'S ALL HER FAULT! EXPEL HER!

HOW?

HOPELESS, HOPELESS HOPELESS!

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER PERHAPS MY FACELESS ONES CAN DO SOMETHING!

WHAT--! THE DOOR- IT WON'T OPEN! BUT IT IS NEVER LOCKED!

WHAT CAN THIS MEAN?

IT MEANS O WIZARDS, THAT YOU - AND ALL FEN-RA- ARE UNDER ATTACK!

THAT'S WHAT

DON'T YOU DARE MISS NEXT ISSUE!

FIRST NOTES

BUSYBODIES REVISITED

I've raised this issue before and I'll probably raise it again but it concerns an issue that can affect all of us who are comics fans and who want to see the medium continue to grow.

Our friendly neighborhood multi-media book burners, Act on for Children Television, are at it again — and this time they've got syndicated columnist Ellen Goodman to flak for them.

Next to the PTA, ACT is the leading proponent of following the philosophy 'You don't know how to raise your children, so we're going to make your decisions for you.' By pressuring spineless and gutless television executives and sponsors, they have deprived parents of the right to select what they feel is proper entertainment for their children.

Now that they have censored or removed classics that have entertained the public for more than 40 years and left children's programming a true wasteland, they're moving on to destroy what little is left.

Now they want to remove such merchandising-generated shows as 'Pac-Man' and "The Smurfs" because they constitute 'program-length commercials.'

Now the quality of these programs is not the issue: quality is in the eye of the beholders — the viewers or, in the case of children's fare, their parents. ACT president Peggy Charren stated 'This is a pure sales pitch. It's as if Bette Davis's new program, 'Hotel,' were called 'The Marriott Hotel.'

Evidently Ms. Charren was born yesterday. She is obviously completely unaware that the majority of radio shows during the 1930s and 1940s — and the early television programs to the 1950s — included the sponsor's name.

The line between programs that were generated by merchandising items and merchandising items that were generated by programs blurs. The Popeye newspaper strip started in the 1920s, went to theatrical cartoons shortly thereafter, and those cartoons started appearing on television in the late 1940s (more recently replaced by the watered-down and boring ACT-approved fare). Popeye was also on children's radio in the 1940s.

Popeye's name and image has appeared on a ton of products over the past fifty years — on some comparatively healthy breakfast cereals, on a thriving fast-food chicken chain, on a popular arcade and home video game. Popeye out-merchandises most other cartoon characters.

Yet the vast wealth of Popeye product — or Mickey Mouse merchandising, or Pac-Man paraphenalia — unleashed upon an obviously receptive public since the turn of the century has not turned our children into a bunch of two-headed mutants. It hasn't harmed our parents or our grandparents.

Columnist Goodman states 'the program-commercials use popular products to attract children in order to sell them more products.' Evidently Ms. Goodman is unaware of the fact that newspaper publishers buy and run her column in order to sell newspapers, for the purpose of making their paper more attractive to advertisers — who want to sell more products. Goodman continues 'It's a circle that limits and corrals our children.' She avoids telling us why this was not true during the past eighty years.

Traditionally, comic books (and strips) have been fodder for children's programming and merchandising, and I would be a fool to ignore the fact that what benefits the comics industry benefits this company. But First Comics publishes a line of books geared to a much older reader — a fact borne out by our recent reader's survey — and most of our line is unsuitable for such use, no matter how watered-down.

But, as the saying goes, right is right and wrong is wrong. And Goodman and Charren are dead wrong.

— Mike Gold

FIRST IN JANUARY.

American Flagg! #8. State of the Union part two, a.k.a. "Take This Job and Shove It!" So you think **Howard Chaykin's** frustrated hero might be looking for a new gig? And what really happened to his former partner, Luther Ironheart, and his new partner Medea Blitz?

Beowulf — The First Graphic Novel: Adapted, drawn and colored by **Jerry Bingham,** lettered by **Ken Bruzenak.** The seminal work of epic fiction, the way it was always meant to be told.

E-Man #14: Alec and Nova have finally reached Chicago, and **Joe Staton's** got quite a surprise in store for them upon their arrival: the awesome menace of Randarr the Inexplicable!

Jon Sable, Freelance #12. Perhaps the most gut-wrenching story of the 1980's as Jon Sable returns to Vietnam on a deadly rescue mission! 28 pages of non-stop **Mike Grell** action!

Mars #5. Morgana Trace finally ness up with her fellow crew members — but the reunion's hardly what she expected. And the Black Flame approaches the wind-up of his first adventure!

Starslayer #16. Who's going to betray For'n first — Tamara to Crayne, or Crayne to his enemies? And the extra length conclusion to "Buried Past," the second Grimjack thriller — both stories by **John Ostrander** and **Timothy Truman.**

Warp #13: Sargon returns to her real home. Cumulus is back on Earth trying to clean up David Carson's past, and Prince Chaos is off on Cynosure plotting vengeance on Fen-Ra! **Gillis, Bingham** and **Gustovich** continue the epic adventure!

IN THE CHROMOSPHERE OF A MIDDLE-SIZE STAR IN A DISTANT UNIVERSE, TWO TINY FIGURES ARE RAPIDLY APPROACHING DEATH BY VAPORIZATION!

ONE IS NAMED **LORD REGULUS** NOBLE OF **FEN-RA** NOW CALLED---

OUTRIDER

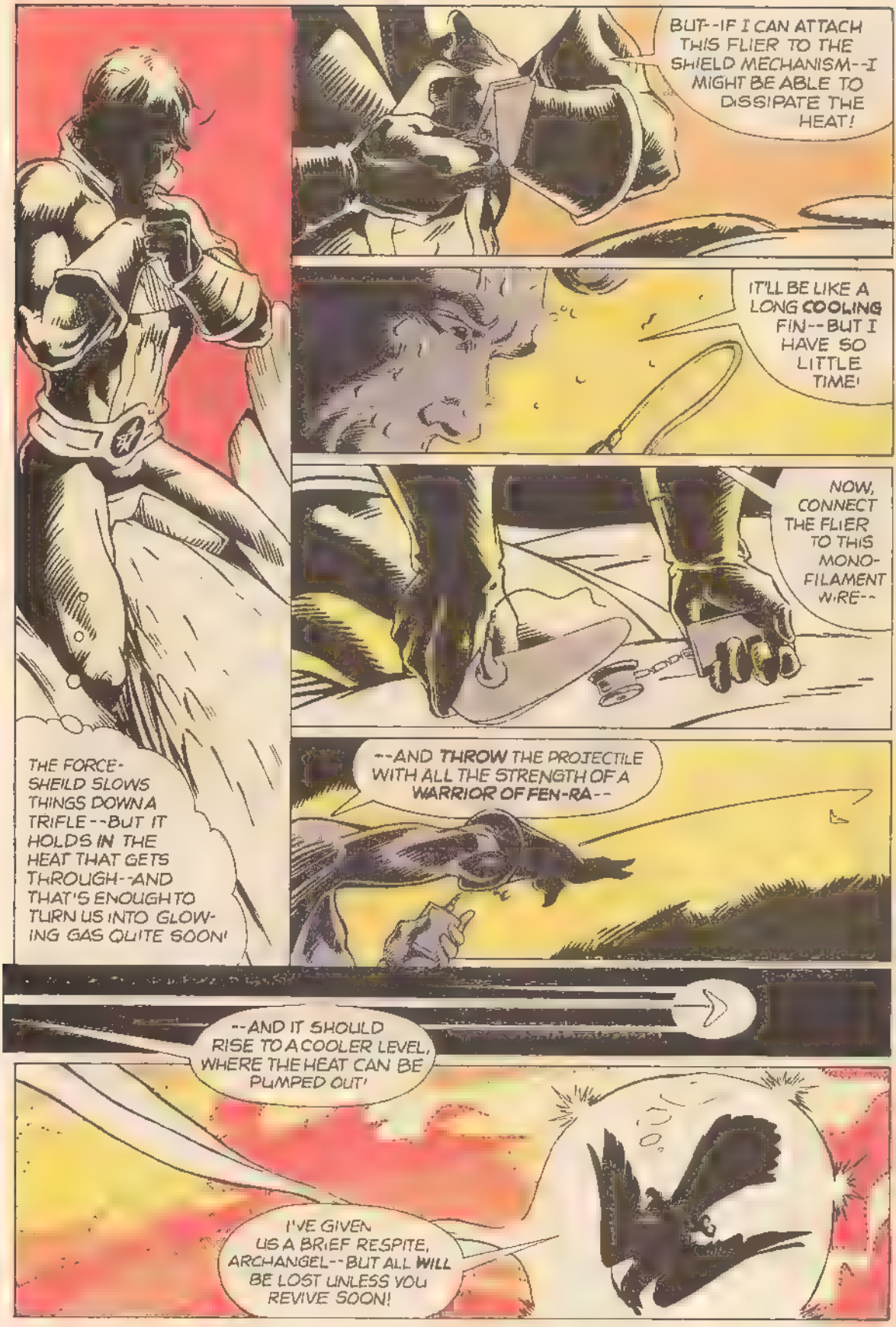
BASED ON CONCEPTS SUGGESTED BY **STUART GORDON** & **BURY ST EDMUND**

THE OTHER IS THE AVIAN ARCHANGEL, WHO, IN SUICIDAL DESPAIR, RANDOMLY TELEPORTED THEM TO THIS PLACE OF DEATH!

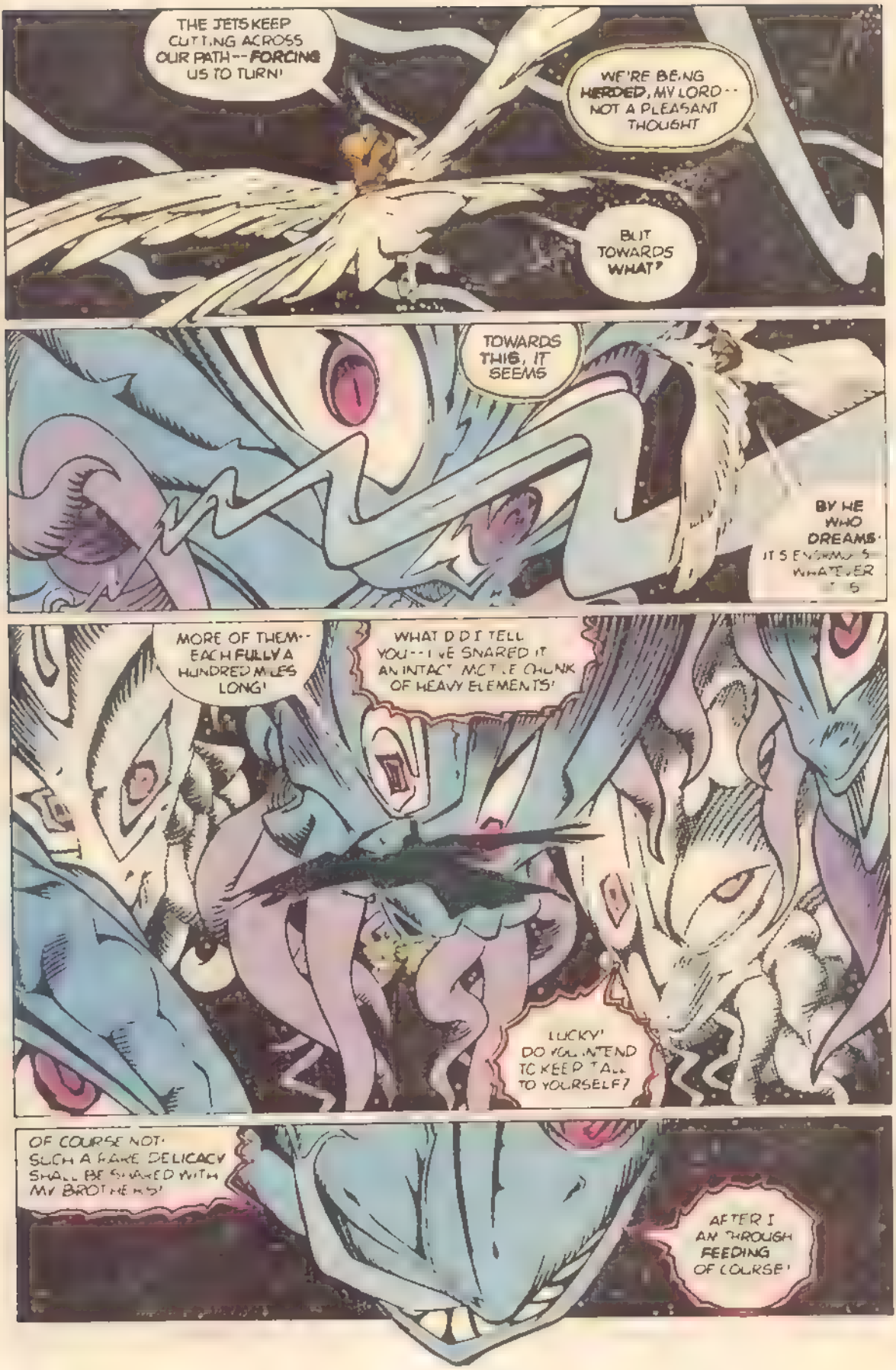
NOW, WITH **ARCHANGEL** UNCONSCIOUS, THEIR FORCE-SHIELDS **USELESS** AGAINST THE BUILDING HEAT, **DEATH** IS VERY BRIGHT BEFORE THEM!

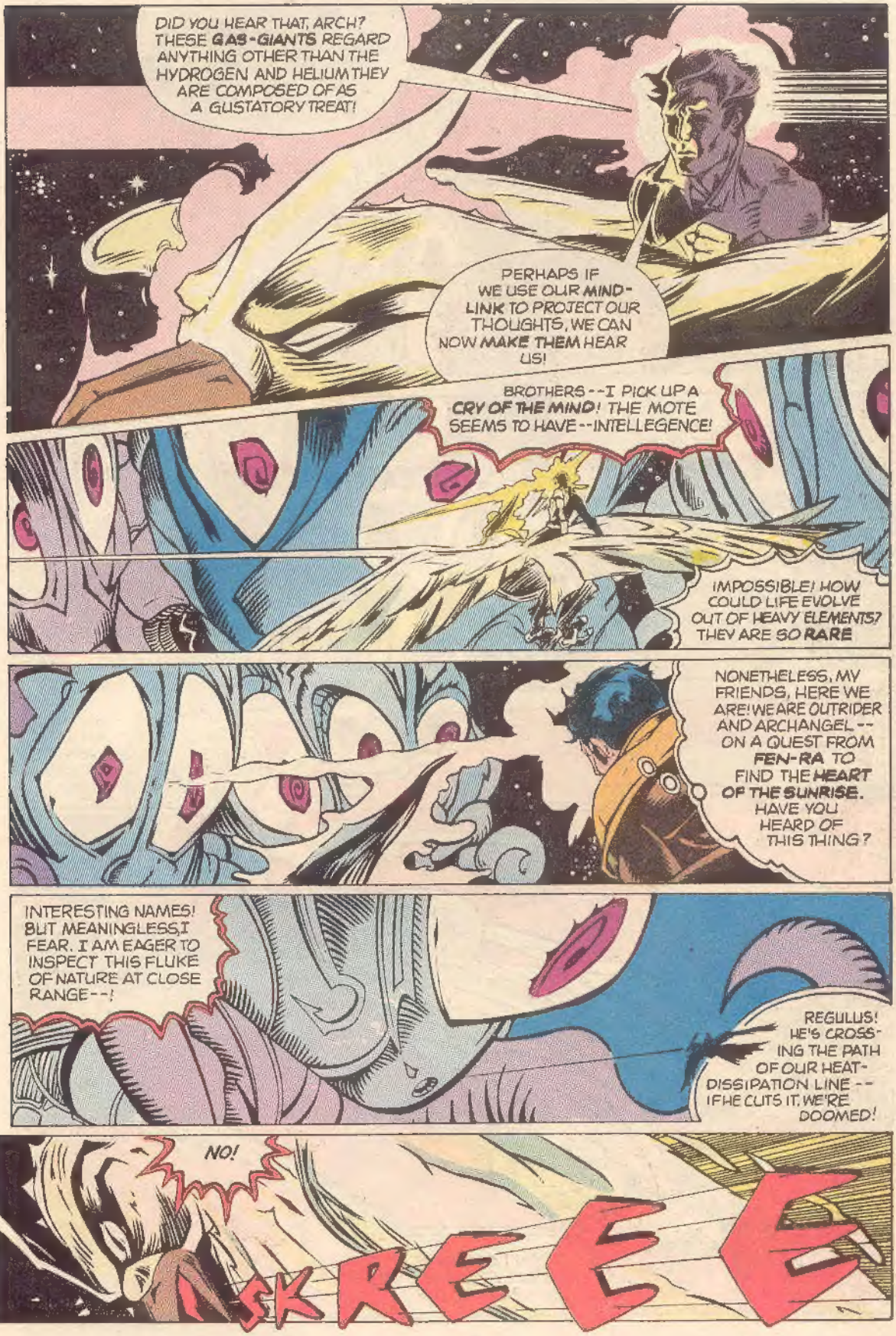
the BROTHERHOOD of STARS!

PETER B. GILLIS CREATOR & WRITER
DOUG RICE INKER
RICK TAYLOR LETTERER
LENIN DELSOL PENCILLER
JANICE COHEN COLORIST
RICK OLIVER EDITOR

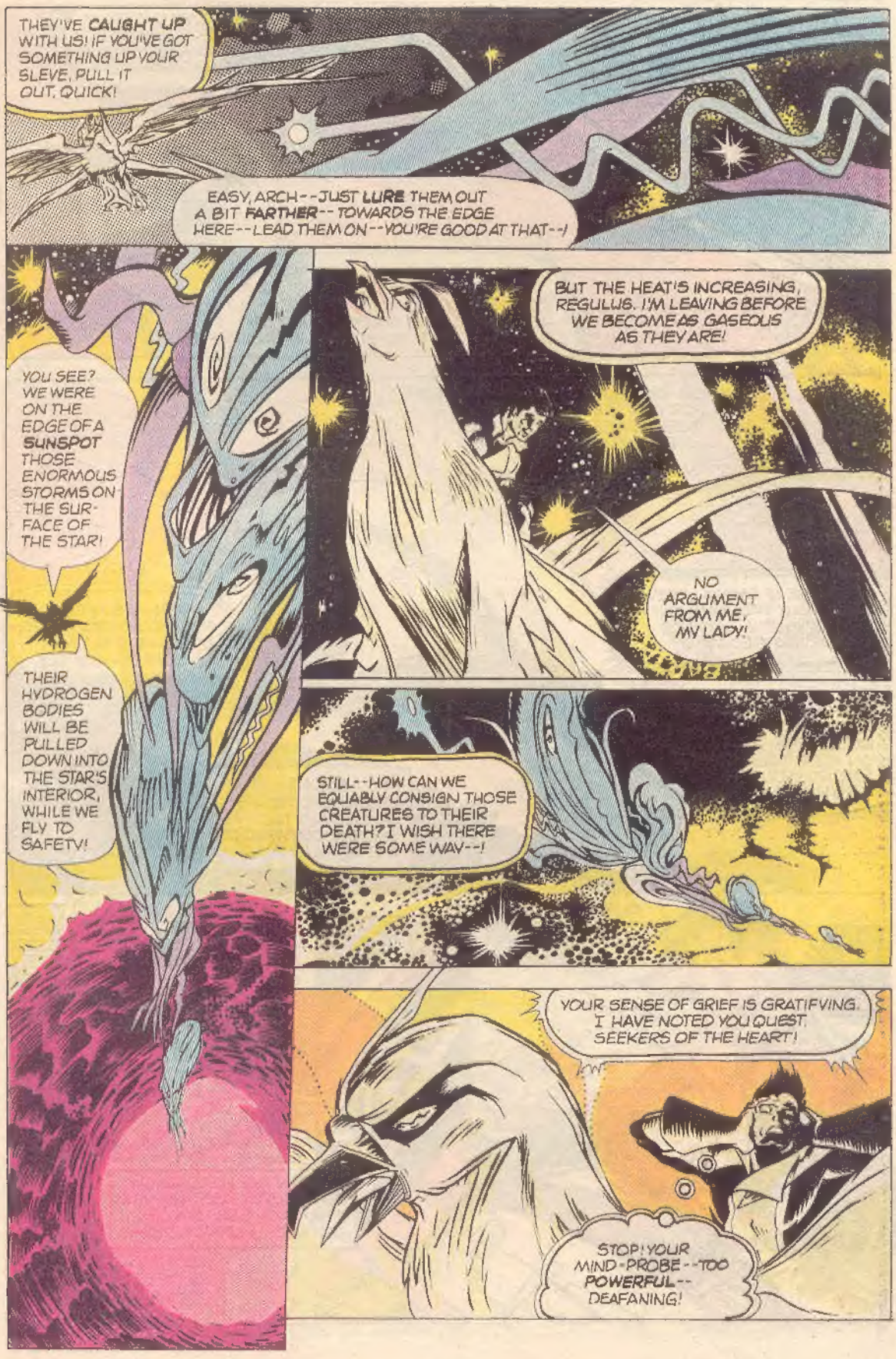

BUT--IF I CAN ATTACH THIS FLIER TO THE SHIELD MECHANISM--I MIGHT BE ABLE TO DISSIPATE THE HEAT!
IT'LL BE LIKE A LONG COOLING FIN--BUT I HAVE SO LITTLE TIME!
NOW, CONNECT THE FLIER TO THIS MONO-FILAMENT WIRE--
THE FORCE-SHEILD SLOWS THINGS DOWN A TRIFLE--BUT IT HOLDS IN THE HEAT THAT GETS THROUGH--AND THAT'S ENOUGH TO TURN US INTO GLOWING GAS QUITE SOON!
--AND THROW THE PROJECTILE WITH ALL THE STRENGTH OF A WARRIOR OF FEN-RA--
--AND IT SHOULD RISE TO A COOLER LEVEL, WHERE THE HEAT CAN BE PUMPED OUT!
I'VE GIVEN US A BRIEF RESPITE, ARCHANGEL--BUT ALL WILL BE LOST UNLESS YOU REVIVE SOON!

I I M--
--BACK, MY LORD
WELL, MILADY, IF YOU'VE MASTERED YOU'RE DEATH-WISH FOR THE MOMENT, PERHAPS YOU WOULD FLY US OUT OF HERE?
MY, YOU GET NASTY WHEN YOU'RE SCARED, MY LORD
BUT NEVER FEAR. I MAY STILL BE WEAK FROM MY HELLRIDE--
--BUT I CAN FLY THESE WINDS AS WELL AS ANY OTHERS. WE WILL SOON BE SAFE
WHAT'S THAT--?!
--A PLASMA JET OF SOME SORT--NEARLY HIT US!
MORE OF THEM-- ALL AROUND!
TO TOUCH THEM WOULD MEAN INSTANT DEATH BY COMBUSTION!


THE JETS KEEP CUTTING ACROSS OUR PATH -- FORCING US TO TURN!
WE'RE BEING HERDED, MY LORD -- NOT A PLEASANT THOUGHT
BUT TOWARDS WHAT?
TOWARDS THIS, IT SEEMS
BY HE WHO DREAMS. IT'S ENORMOUS WHATEVER IT IS
MORE OF THEM -- EACH FULLY A HUNDRED MILES LONG!
WHAT DID I TELL YOU -- I'VE SNARED IT AN INTACT MOLTEN CHUNK OF HEAVY ELEMENTS!
LUCKY! DO YOU INTEND TO KEEP IT ALL TO YOURSELF?
OF COURSE NOT. SUCH A RARE DELICACY SHALL BE SHARED WITH MY BROTHERS!
AFTER I AM THROUGH FEEDING OF COURSE!


DID YOU HEAR THAT, ARCH? THESE GAS-GIANTS REGARD ANYTHING OTHER THAN THE HYDROGEN AND HELIUM THEY ARE COMPOSED OF AS A GUSTATORY TREAT!
PERHAPS IF WE USE OUR MIND-LINK TO PROJECT OUR THOUGHTS, WE CAN NOW MAKE THEM HEAR US!
BROTHERS--I PICK UP A CRY OF THE MIND! THE MOTE SEEMS TO HAVE--INTELLEGENCE!
IMPOSSIBLE! HOW COULD LIFE EVOLVE OUT OF HEAVY ELEMENTS? THEY ARE SO RARE
NONETHELESS, MY FRIENDS, HERE WE ARE! WE ARE OUTRIDER AND ARCHANGEL--ON A QUEST FROM FEN-RA TO FIND THE HEART OF THE SUNRISE. HAVE YOU HEARD OF THIS THING?
INTERESTING NAMES! BUT MEANINGLESS, I FEAR. I AM EAGER TO INSPECT THIS FLUKE OF NATURE AT CLOSE RANGE--!
REGULUS! HE'S CROSSING THE PATH OF OUR HEAT-DISSIPATION LINE--IF HE CUTS IT, WE'RE DOOMED!
NO!
SKREEE

AGONY! THE CRY OF THE MIND RIPS US THROUGH AND THROUGH!
MY PLASMAS REFLUX, O BROTHERS! I AM DAMAGED!
THE MICROBE MAY BE INTELLIGENT--BUT IT IS VICIOUS!
LET US TRAP AND EAT IT--AFTER WE'VE REMOVED ITS MIND-STING!
OF ALL THE STUPID, PANIC-STRICKEN REACTIONS, ARCHANGEL--NOW PLEASE MOVE IT!
MY LORD--I CAN'T OUTRUN THESE PLASMA JETS--AND OUR SHIELD IS HEATING UP AGAIN!
I KNOW THAT--NOW VEER!
ARCH, YOU SEE THAT DIMMER, DARKER SPOT NEAR THE HORIZON? TRY TO MAKE FOR THAT!
I DON'T SEE WHAT POSSIBLE GOOD THAT CAN DO--BUT I'LL TRY!


THEY'VE CAUGHT UP WITH US! IF YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING UP YOUR SLEVE, PULL IT OUT, QUICK!
EASY, ARCH--JUST LURE THEM OUT A BIT FARTHER--TOWARDS THE EDGE HERE--LEAD THEM ON--YOU'RE GOOD AT THAT--!
BUT THE HEAT'S INCREASING, REGULUS. I'M LEAVING BEFORE WE BECOME AS GASEOUS AS THEY ARE!
NO ARGUMENT FROM ME, MY LADY!
YOU SEE? WE WERE ON THE EDGE OF A SUNSPOT THOSE ENORMOUS STORMS ON THE SURFACE OF THE STAR!
THEIR HYDROGEN BODIES WILL BE PULLED DOWN INTO THE STAR'S INTERIOR, WHILE WE FLY TO SAFETY!
STILL--HOW CAN WE EQUABLY CONSIGN THOSE CREATURES TO THEIR DEATH? I WISH THERE WERE SOME WAY--!
YOUR SENSE OF GRIEF IS GRATIFYING. I HAVE NOTED YOU QUEST SEEKERS OF THE HEART!
STOP! YOUR MIND-PROBE--TOO POWERFUL--DEAFANING!

I AM SORRY--AND FOR MY CHILDREN AS WELL. AS YOU SEE, I PROTECT YOU BOTH--THEM FROM THE STORM AND YOU FROM MY RADIANCE.
I AM THE STAR IN WHOSE BOSOM YOU ARE. LIKE MY SISTERS, I HAVE HEARD OF THE HEART OF THE SUNRISE--AND I CAN SENSE THAT YOU BOTH BORE IT FOR A BRIEF TIME.
THEN--DO YOU KNOW OF MOTHER STAR? FOR IT IS HER WE ULTIMATELY SEEK, SINCE THE HEART WAS RIPPED FROM OUR GRASP!
ALAS, SHE IS ONLY A LEGEND TO US. BUT THOUGH WE DO NOT KNOW--OTHERS OF OUR KINDRED MAY!
THEN--WE ARE FAR FROM OUR GOAL INDEED. IF EVEN THE MOTHER STAR CAN HELP US!
BUT YOU ARE FARTHER ALONG THAN YOU WERE! AND I SHALL DO THIS FOR YOU, QUESTERS--PROPEL YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY AND SMOOTH YOUR PATH FURTHER ON!
AND A SOLAR PROMINENCE LEAPS UP, CASTING THE SPHERE OUTWARD ON THE STELLAR WIND--!
OUR GOAL? I THOUGHT YOU WANTED NOTHING MORE THAN TO BE RID OF ME, MY LADY!
AND ONE DAY I SHALL, BUT YOU'RE NOT WORTH COMMITTING SUICIDE OVER. I AM WITH YOU--FOR NOW.
AND ON THE INSIGNIA ON OUTRIDER'S BELT, A SMALL SHARD OF BRILLIANCE GLIMMERS UNNOTICED--!
NEXT ISSUE: RAIDERS OF THE IRON STAR!